



Klamath Network Featured Creature

April 2005

Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*)

FIELD NOTES:

General Description:

Corynorhinus townsendii is primarily a cave dwelling species. The bat is pale gray of brown above and buff below. The wings and interfemoral membrane (stretching between the tail and hindlegs) is without fur. Enormous ears extend to the middle of the body when laid back and 2 large glandular bumps are located on the nose.

Behavior:

In summer, females form maternity colonies of up to 200 bats. Young are large weighing up to 25 percent of the body weight of the mother. Juveniles can fly at 2 ½ to 3 weeks of age. During winter, when Townsend's Big-eared bat hibernates in a cave, its huge ears are folded back and if the bat is disturbed, the ears unfold and move in circles like antennae. Mating takes place in fall and winter. Fertilization is delayed and ovulation occurs before or after the female leaves hibernation. Gestation is between 60 and 100 days. One young is usually born in late spring or early summer in maternity colonies located in caves and sometimes in abandoned buildings.



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Feeding:

These agile fliers venture out to forage only after dark, using their echolocation calls (ultrasonic sounds bounced off prey and other surroundings and received by its large ears) to hunt moths and other insects.

Where to see it in the Klamath Parks:

You can find Townsend's Big-eared bats in caves and abandoned buildings in Lava Beds NM, Oregon Caves NM, Redwood NSP, and Whiskeytown NRA.

Habitat:

The species most typical habitat is arid western desert scrub, and pine and pinion-juniper forest regions.



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Distribution:

Corynorhinus townsendii is found throughout western North America, from British Columbia south to Oaxaca, Mexico, with two endangered subspecies in isolated areas in the Ozark and Central Appalachian regions of the United States. They are extremely sensitive to disturbance at their roosting sites and have suffered severe population declines throughout